United Nations

Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- General Assembly, in resolution adopted without a vote, affirms its support for President Aristide of Haiti, and condemns attempt to unlawfully replace him; says Governors Island Agreement is only valid framework for resolving Haitian crisis.

- Secretary-General's Special Representative in El Salvador requests investigation into recent killings of Army lieutenant and two members of National Police; seeks investigation and prosecution of illegal armed groups.

- General Assembly would recommend that United Nations, to consolidate democracy, provide electoral assistance to requesting States before and after elections, by terms of draft resolution approved by Third Committee.

- Panel of High-level Personalities on African Development concludes third meeting; deliberations focused on conditions conducive to long-term development in Africa, security, regional integration and cooperation.

- United Nations Department for Development Support and Management Services signs cooperation agreement with International Chamber of Commerce to enhance private sector's role in developing countries.

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The General Assembly today affirmed its support for the constitutional President of Haiti, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, and for his Prime Minister, and strongly condemned the attempt to unlawfully replace him. In a resolution adopted without a vote, the Assembly condemned the use of violence and military coercion and the violation of human rights in Haiti. It declared unacceptable any entity arising from the unlawful situation in the country and demanded the return of President Aristide, as well as full implementation of the Haitian Constitution.

(more)

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By the resolution, the Assembly also supported the process of political dialogue carried out under the auspices of the Special Envoy of the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS). It asserted that the Governors Island Agreement remained the only valid framework for resolving the crisis in Haiti, and asked the Secretary-General to bring back the International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH) as soon as possible and to pursue efforts to deploy the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH), in accordance with the Agreement. The Assembly expressed concern for the Haitian people and reasserted that the Haitian military authorities were fully responsible for the suffering resulting directly from their disrespect for the Haitian Constitution.

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The Secretary-General's Special Representative in El Salvador, Augusto Ramirez-Ocampo has requested that an investigation be conducted into the recent assassinations of a lieutenant in the country's Armed Forces and two members of the National Police. In a statement issued in San Salvador on Friday, he asked that the investigations be conducted with the same rigour as had been applied to other recent crimes that had so troubled the national and international community.

Mr. Ramirez-Ocampo, who is Chief of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL), announced that he had instructed ONUSAL Police and Human Rights Division teams to assist in the investigations, stressing "the urgent and absolute need to regain calm". He said he hoped that a Joint Group would be formed promptly to investigate whether illegal armed groups with political intentions existed, and, if such groups were found, to prosecute them.

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The General Assembly would recommend that the United Nations, in order to consolidate democracy, provide electoral assistance to requesting States before and after elections, by the terms of a draft resolution approved in the Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) this morning. The Organization would be requested to ensure that there was adequate time to carry out an electoral assistance mission and that conditions existed for a free and fair election. The assistance provided by the United Nations would also include recommending programmes which might contribute to the consolidation of the democratization process.

The draft was approved following three recorded votes with five countries voting against two of its provisions (Cuba, China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Myanmar and Iraq) and, respectively, 13 and 14 abstaining. The draft as a whole, which deals with enhancing the effectiveness of the principle of periodic and genuine elections, was approved by a vote of 138 in favour to 1 against (Cuba), with 15 abstentions.

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The Panel of High-level Personalities on African Development, which was appointed by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali one year ago, concluded its third meeting at Headquarters at the end of last week. The Panel's deliberations focused on conditions conducive to long-term development in Africa, security and African development, and regional integration and cooperation. The Panel also discussed the issue of diversification of African economies and the feasibility of a diversification fund.

In his opening statement, the Secretary-General recalled that the Panel was his "think tank" on African development. Introducing the topics on the agenda, he stressed that peace, stability and security were prerequisites for development, citing the examples of Somalia, Angola and Liberia. He stated that "peace cannot long be preserved where economic injustice is systematically perpetuated or where the opportunity is continually denied", and that "peace will be fragile if political institutions are not accountable, if political participation is not widespread, or if human rights are not respected".

The Panel recognized that peace and security were fundamental preconditions for development and that they required the involvement of the African people and leadership. The Panel also made specific recommendations regarding United Nations assistance to regional entities in conflict management and conflict resolution, as well as the Organization's role in the democratization of Africa. The Panel also stressed the role of United Nations field representatives in fostering preventive diplomacy.

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The United Nations Department for Development Support and Management Services has signed a cooperation agreement with the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) to enhance the private sector's role in developing countries and in countries whose economies are in transition. The agreement provides, among other things, for exchanges of information and expertise, and for collaborative efforts to provide the skills needed for the development of entrepreneurship.

The Department and the ICC also agreed to work together with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other multilateral and regional financial institutions to advance their common interest in promoting entrepreneurship and sustainable development.

The agreement was signed on Friday by Ji Chaozhu, Under-Secretary-General for Development Support and Management Service, and Jean Charles Rouher, Secretary-General of the International Chamber of Commerce, Paris.

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